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ABSTRACT

New York City's public high school was born in the City of Brooklyn and carried to the merged City of Greater New York in 1898 by William H. Maxwell, first City Superintendent of Schools in New York City and former head of Brooklyn's schools. Under his direction, high school enrollments grew ten-fold between 1898 and 1914 to nearly 63,000 students. The Brooklyn high school model had the following characteristics: (1) Democratic admission; (2) open enrollment to all elementary graduates; (3) a common core curriculum for all students but with high schools that specialized in college preparatory, commercial, manual or vocational programs; and (4) building designs that reflected the instructional needs of the curriculum. The Brooklyn model of elementary, secondary and collegiate levels with a one-year bridge of preparatory school. The Brooklyn model reflected the American educational mainstream at that time. Sixty related reference notes are appended. (CFR)

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BORN IN BROOKLYN: THE ORIGINS OF THE N.Y.C. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL, 1890-1914

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Born in Brooklyn:
The origins of the N.Y.C. Public High School, 1890-1914

by

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I. Introduction

Bands, fireworks and parades ushered in the birth of the City of Greater New York in January of 1898. The Brooklyn Bridge had physically joined the cities of Brooklyn and New York in 1883. Fifteen years later they were legally joined, along with their country cousins, Queens and Richmond Counties, by act of the N.Y. State legislature.

The nation's largest and newest city (with over 3.4 million according to the 1900 Census) was inaugurated just in time to enter the 20th century, brash and energetic and ready to create the grandest mercantile center in the world. The City's public schools, especially its high schools, shared in the optimism and explosive growth of N.Y.C. In 1898 high school enrollments represented 1.8% of total registration of 366,000. By 1914 they represented nearly 8% of registrations which had by then grown to 808,000. In absolute terms, enrollments increased over the sixteen years nearly ten-fold, approaching 63,000 in the fall of 1914.[1]

High schools, however, were new to the Old City of New York. The first public day high schools were not organized until September of 1897. Brooklyn, on the other hand, could claim four high schools at the time of merger, and twenty years of experience with secondary education.

Old New York City (Manhattan and the Bronx), even though the largest city in the nation, had largely neglected public day secondary education. The first public day high schools were opened only four months prior to creation of the merged "Greater City." The few available public secondary places offered by the Board of Education were found in four evening high schools which experienced chronically poor attendance and produced few graduates. A limited number of places were available for boys in the preparatory year of the City College of New York (CCNY) and for girls in the preparatory division of the Normal College. They were not, however, true high schools, but one-year programs of pre-collegiate preparation. Entry to the sub-freshman year (as it was called) at CCNY and the Normal College (later Hunter College) was limited by admissions examinations and was under the direct control of the colleges rather than the Board of Education.

Old N.Y.C. had devised its own policies regarding post-primary education. The educational model they had adopted, however, largely circumvented the institution we have come to know as the "high school." We shall examine this alternative model later in this paper.

As I will argue, the modern public high schools of N.Y.C. (as distinct institutions and which collectively constituted a separate "secondary" level of education) originated in the City of Brooklyn. The Brooklyn model of secondary education was carried to the newly merged City by Brooklyn's former Superintendent of Schools (1887-1898), William H. Maxwell.

Elected by the N.Y.C. Board of Education as its first City Superintendent of Schools, Maxwell served in that capacity for 20 years, overseeing the growth and development of the nation's largest educational system. The boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, along with Queens and Staten Island, would become the beneficiaries of Brooklyn's 20-year history of public secondary education. The seeds of modern high school education, initially planted in Brooklyn, ultimately would take root and flourish throughout the City of Greater New York.

We shall examine the state of secondary education in the cities of Brooklyn and Old N.Y.C. in the 1890s and contrast their educational practices. We shall then turn our attention to the development of secondary schooling in the merged city and the ways in which Brooklyn philosophies and practices influenced city-wide secondary level developments.

II. Education in the City of Brooklyn in the 1890s

Brooklyn, with a population of 1,166,000 in 1900, was a major city in its own right, even though it grew up in the shadows of Old N.Y.C., a city of 2,000,000.[2] It maintained a large school system, with average registers in 1898 approaching 135,000.[3] While its roots stretched back to the 17th century, it had not reached its final geographic borders until 1895 when it incorporated the town of Flatlands. Flatbush , New Utrecht and Gravesend had been annexed only the year before.

The old parts of the City, the areas around City Hall that were connected to Manhattan by the Brooklyn Bridge, were well developed, but vast stretches of Brooklyn were "suburban"

while others were decidedly rural, right down to their one-room school houses. Brooklyn, in many important respects, more closely resembled medium and small-sized cities throughout the northeast than its colossal neighbor across the East River. It was much less densely settled, had fewer immigrants (relatively and absolutely), and was more "middle-class" and "middle-American" than Manhattan. It had a large and well established Protestant population of English, Scots, Scots-Irish, German and Scandenavian descent, along with German and Irish Catholics. Relatively few "new immigrants" (East European Jewish and Southern Italian, Polish and Slavic Catholics) had yet made their way across the East River.[5]

Public common schools existed early in the 19th century in the City of Brooklyn and in the towns of Kings county which later were absorbed by the City. Local educational prerogatives were deeply rooted in the soil of Kings County and survived the incorporation of towns into the City of Brooklyn. Ward Trustees retained many rights in the field of education, up until the City itself was merged with Old N.Y. These rights included school site selection, the building and maintaining of schools, a strong voice in teacher appointments and selection of school janitors.

Secondary education in Brooklyn evolved out of the existing public primary school system. Central Grammar School, founded in 1878, later evolved into Boys' High School and Girls' High School during the 1880s. Manual Training High school opened in 1894, and Erasmus Hall (founded as a private academy in 1786) was absorbed by the Brooklyn Board of Education

in 1896.

The Training School for Teachers, established in 1885, graduated about 100 teachers a year by 1895. In that year State legislation made post-secondary teacher training a virtual requirement for the licensing of teachers. This action simultaneously raised the level of teacher preparation and increased the importance of the City's high schools. As most teachers in the City's primary schools were women, it is not surprising that 64% of all high school students were female in 1895.[6]

It is important to record that Maxwell believed strongly that city school systems should assume responsibility for training many of its own teachers. By placing teacher training schools under the direct jurisdiction of the school board, it would help to insure a close articulation between teacher preparation, prescribed courses of studies in the primary schools and preparation in the approved classroom teaching methods.[7]

The extension of Brooklyn's school system in the 1870s from the primary into the secondary level, and the establishment of a school of teacher training in the 1880s (which became a true post-secondary institution in the mid-1890s), mirrors the mainstream of educational growth and development during that period in the nation-at-large. As Bessie Louise Pierce noted long ago, "By 1880 [in the U.S.], legal and legislative objections to the establishment of high schools had succumbed to the conviction that education was essential in the new social and industrial order."[8]

Popular demand for high school education in Brooklyn expressed itself to and through the City's Board of Education. Unlike Old N.Y.C., which waited until 1896 for special State authorization to estalbish public high schools,[9] Brooklyn acted on its own accord to found high schools.[10] The response of Maxwell to a shortage of high school places reflects Brooklyn's commitment to secondary education.

> One solution of the difficulty [inadequate number of high school places for grammar school graduates seeking entrance] would be to admit only those pupils for whom there are seats - presumably those best prepared for high school work - and to refuse admission to all others. The people of this borough, it is safe to say, will not tolerate the adoption of this policy. Almost universally they recognize the fact that even a year's work in a high school is of great practical value to their children, and that to deprive a child of the opportunity for secondary education, be the period ever so brief, is a gross wrong. Further more, they feel that the policy which has not become fixed in Brooklyn - that all children who complete the grammar school course must have an opportunity to pursue a high school course - is a policy that will admit of no interference.[11]

Thus we find that in 1895 there are sufficient places in the entering classes at the Brooklyn high schools to accommodate the equivalent of 72% of the City's grammar school graduates, and with the expansion of Manual Training H.S. and the addition of Erasmus Hall, that proportion increased to nearly 84% in 1897, Brooklyn's last year as an independent city.[12] We do not know the degree to which grammar school graduates are representative of the economic classes and ethnic groups in late 19th century Brooklyn. But we can see that opportunity to receive an education from primary through high school (and post-secondary teacher training) was available to all, and that progress from one level to the next was officially limited only by the requirement of successful completion of the prior level.[13]

The high school policies of Brooklyn's school board, as enunciated by Superintendent Maxwell, need to be closely examined before we cross the river to observe the state of secondary education in Old N.Y.C.

First and foremost, Brooklyn championed "open enrollment" at the high school level.

> Since the establishment of high schools in this city, it has been the policy of the Board of Education to give to every graduate of the grammar schools an opportunity to obtain a high school education. This is not the general rule in cities. It is the American plan. It is the democratic plan. It confers the same benefits on all - rich and poor alike. It is directly opposed to the aristocratic plan which prevails in a few cities, notably New York, of selecting a small number of grammar school graduates for high school work. The people of this city have distinctly shown that they will not tolerate any deviation from the American policy. [Parents protested when nearly 100 girls could not be accommodated at Girls' High School in 1894.] The Board of Education promptly responded to the popular demand by providing temporary quarters for those at first excluded and by opening the Manual Training High School to girls. This lesson should not be forgotten. The people will continue to demand that all children shall have the opportunity to pursue their studies in the public schools for twelve years.[14]

It should be remembered that in 1895 N.Y.C., which followed what Maxwell termed the "aristocratic plan" of high school education, had no public day high schools, and provided limited access by examination to the preparatory year of City College and the Normal College.

In addition to insuring the opportunity for high school entry to all elementary school graduates (and with no selective entry or assignment by examination), Maxwell pressed to have the high school acknowledged as an institution separate and

distinct from the elementary school, the one "form" of education widely known in his day.

> A high school is not an elementary school. While the work of the former is an extension of the work of the latter, it introduces different subjects of study and employs methods that are not quite the same.

The high school building itself would be distinct and molded upon the design of the high school curriculum.

> It follows that a high school building should be different from an elementary school building.... It should be designed to include physical, chemical, and biological laboratories, drawing rooms, study rooms, and a gymnasium, as well as recitation rooms.[15]

The emerging pattern of the high school course of study, according to Maxwell, incorporated four main fields of study: language and literature, mathematics, science and history and civics.

> In addition to these four lines of work, in some schools... opportunity to study three foreign languages should be given to those desiring to enter college; to those desiring manual training to take up shop work in wood and metals and to make a special study of mechanics; and to those who are preparing for business life to study commercial branches.[16]

Maxwell argued that all high schools should offer the "four main lines of work," but that "it will be a matter of economy and efficiency, to organize in separate schools the courses for special and additional lines."[17] This mode of high school organization - common academic core for all students, but with a high school devoted to a particular line of interest, aptitude or career path, became the dominant pattern in the City of New York's high school system. It was against this model that the later established comprehensive neighborhood high schools, initially established in outlying, more sparcely

settled sections of the City, would be in competition.

There is an inherent conflict between high schools organized by geographic service area (and which seek to offer a comprehensive set of educational paths) and high schools organized functionally by field of specialization (academic, manual, technical, commercial, artistic, vocational etc.) which serve the entire city. In the late 19th century however, with limited numbers of students who completed elementary school and wished to enter high schools (educational opportunity did not insure that all children would enroll and persist in school), specialized high schools, available by choice to all children in the City, made eminently good sense. As Maxwell argued,

> While all the high schools should contain the four main lines of work..., it will be a matter of economy and of efficiency, to organize in separate schools the courses for special and additional lines. For instance the Girls' High School and the Boys' High School have courses preparing for entrance to any college in the country. It is more than probable that these schools will provide for fifty years to come ample accommodation for those desiring college preparation. This work should, therefore, be confined to these schools. To place college preparatory courses in competing high schools would be a foolish waste of the public money; it would be worse, it would dissipate the energy of the teaching force and weaken the efficiency of all the schools. [18]

Maxwell, as the passage reveals, was unable to perceive the breadth and depth of popular desire for college education. Nor did he seem to be aware that his very championing of high school education would lead to increased pressures for collegiate entry. His shortsightedness on these points, however, does not alter his argument that it was more efficient for Manual Training High School to devote special attention to education in the mechanical arts (leading to higher scientific and

engineering studies as well as to work in industry) than to duplicating Boys' or Girls' High Schools college preparatory program (college here understood as studies in the liberal arts).[19]

Maxwell, who had succeeded in organizing a manual training high school in Brooklyn (1894), agitated for a commercial high school that was separate and distinct in its own right and not appended to an existing institution. Mixing "lines of work" in one school, he believed, was detremental to the effectiveness of each.

> A great college preparatory school has its own peculiar problems and its teachers and students have their own ambitions, which excite enthusiasm and insure unity of purpose, and thus lead to success. Such a school is our Girls' High School or our Boys' High School. The results of the commercial courses in these schools show the folly of trying to unite incongruous elements in one school. These courses are the Cinderellas of our high school system. All that they need, however,is a separate organization, a separate building, and proper co-ordination with the four lines of culture work, to blossom forth into one of the most magnificent and most useful parts of our school system.[20]

Maxwell was successful in founding Commercial High School in Brooklyn (1899-1900) and was instrumental in establishing the High School of Commerce in Manhattan in 1903. It was among the first high schools organized under his superintendency and was perhaps the first high school building in the nation designed expressly to meet the curricular needs of a school of commerce.

While remaining a staunch supporter of specialized high schools, as City Superintendent, he did accept the formation of commercial and manual training departments in high schools which served sparcely settled regions of Queens and Staten Island.

Maxwell was also concerned with the size of high schools. In Brooklyn he argued in favor of limiting high schools to no more than one thousand students.[21] He felt it would not be possible to provide all of the specialized facilities required (labs, gym, assembly room, library, etc.) when the student body grew too large. The press for entry to high schools, however, forced him to set aside such "ideal" limits. The optimal number was raised to 2500 and later, with the continued pressure for high school admissions, many schools were put on continuous session (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), with virtually no upper limit placed on school size.

Maxwell not only wanted to encourage all elementary graduates to enter high school, he also wanted all students to follow a common program for as long as possible, and urged delaying the point at which students were forced to choose a "major."

> The first year's work in all the high schools should be practically the same, so that students, after sufficient experience, may select a special course in any of the high schools for the remaining three years.[22]

A review of the courses of study at Boys', Girls', Erasmus and Manual Training in the late 1890s indicates that there was a high degree of uniformity in the first two years for all the high schools, and for all but Manual in the latter two years. In the case of Manual (and the commercial specialization at Boys' and Girls') it was more the addition of specialized courses than the subtraction of classical studies which characterized its course of study. The inclusion or exclusion of Latin and Greek, and the presence or absence of French and German accounts for most of the differences in the courses

of study both within and between schools.[23]

By the end of his term as Brooklyn Superintendent of Schools Maxwell and the City Board had devised a system of secondary education which included free access for all grammar school graduates, specialized high schools, and a common core high school curriculum. Maxwell had clearly enunciated a policy regarding school specialization, school architecture, and a 4-year secondary program (the American norm) which linked the grammar school to college, polytechnic, teacher training or "for entering at once upon life."[24] Maxwell was in accord with the N.E.A. Committee of Ten in believing that preparation for college and for life were wholly compatible.[25] The Brooklyn model of education, however, differed in several significant respects from schooling as it was practiced in Old New York. To understand Maxwell's (and Brooklyn's) influence on educational developments in the merged City of Greater New York, we need to examine the state of education in Old N.Y.C. in the 1890s.

III. Education in Old New York City in the 1890s

In 1898 Old New York (Manhattan and the Bronx) had a population approaching 2 million, maintained 170 schoolhouses and enrolled nearly 210,000 students. Of this number, only 1,674 were registered in public day high schools, or 0.008% of enrollments.[26] The three existing public day high schools had opened the previous fall: Boys' High School (later De Witt Clinton) and Girls' High School (later Wadleigh) in Manhattan

and Mixed High School (serving both boys and girls, later Morris) in the Bronx. All were housed in temporary quarters, either abandoned elementary school buildings or in space carved out of functioning elementary schools. How could the largest school system in the largest city of the United States have been so deficient in the provision of secondary education?

Some post-elementary education was available in Old N.Y.C., both in the public and private sectors. The Board of Education had opened an evening high school as early as 1866. By 1895 nearly 7000 students were registered in four evening high schools. But average nightly attendance (all classes met five nights per week) was only about 2500 and, even with modest requirements, only 162 individuals earned graduation diplomas.

Evening high school in the 1890s did not appear to lead anywhere academically: it did not serve to prepare one for college admissions examinations. In fact, registration was heaviest in courses with the most practical content: bookkeeping, arithmetic, phonography, penmanship and English.[27]

Graduates of the 7-year elementary program could enter the numerous fee paying propriatary schools which offered instruction in trade and commerical studies. Several philanthropic organizations also provided free or subsidized vocational training.[28]

For those students eager to pursue further academic studies, there were a number of preparatory schools and academies which prepared students to take the entrance exams to the various colleges. Most of these "prep" schools, church or university

related, were fee paying and served the children of N.Y.C.'s established classes. There were, however, preparatory schools in the tenement districts (and instructional programs in some settlement houses) which prepared candidates for the N.Y. State Regents' examinations. These were also fee paying schools, but charged rates within the reach of tenement dwellers.

One could sit as an external Regents' examination candidate (rather than as a student from a state registered secondary school) and seek to quality for a Regents' Diploma and for entry into college or university.[29]

Finally, a limited number of highly promising students could qualify, by entrance examination, to enter the free municipal colleges: City College of New York for boys and the Normal College for girls. from its founding in 1849 as the Free Academy, C.C.N.Y. accepted students as young as 13 years of age directly from the City's common schools, who were placed in a preparatory or sub-freshman year. The five-year program (one year preparatory, 4 years baccalaureate) was designed to function as a combined prep school and college. It granted the bachelor's degree commencing in 1854, and became a college in name in 1866.[30]

When the Normal College (later Hunter) opened for young women in 1870, it too provided a preparatory year. It had little choice since there were few available institutions to bridge the grammar school-college gap.

Both of the free municipal colleges functioned up until 1900 with only a single preparatory year linking it to the grammar schools. It is hard to determine the level of instruction at these colleges and how it may have compared with other late 19th century colleges. We do know, however, that the graduates of City were able to gain entry to the graduate and professional schools of the day, including the graduate schools at Columbia University. It must also be acknowledged that their students were the best and the brightest of their very large grammar school cohort. Yet the experience of the municipal colleges raises the intriguing question as to whether or not four years of high school was a necessary prerequisite for successfully undertaking collegiate level work. Did four years of high school work derive from the inherent logic of academic preparation? Might not three or even two years be sufficient time for some students to prepare themselves academically for college?

It was not until 1900, when pressured by the N.Y.S. and the City Board of Education, and especially its New City Superintendent, William Maxwell, that City College was forced to expand its sub-freshman preparatory year to a three-year school, tied to but institutionally distinct from C.C.N.Y., named Townsend Harris Hall.[31] As an historian of City College has observed

> In the late nineties 4-year high schools were established in the city by the board of education, and since the college and the high schools each took students at the close of the elementary school course, they came into competition with each other. Throughout the country, moreover, colleges were being sharply separated from the secondary schools and were requiring high-school graduation or its equivalent for admission. Finally the New York State Board of Regents

> warned the college authorities that unless the course was extended they would refuse to recognize its degrees.[32]

Given the heavy load "City" required of its preparatory students at Townsend Harris Hall, the State did accept a three rather than a four year secondary course, which still gave to City College a full year advantage compared to the Board of Education's high schools.

The battle between the Board of Education and City College was more than a war over "turf" and "students" (although that was certainly present). Number of years of schooling was very much at issue and even if one year were saved (as at Townsend Harris), it would be of real benefit to students, argued "City."

> The reason that the [City] College was so determined in this period to maintain a preparatory division, was its desire to give its students an opportunity to go on to graduate studies or the activities of practical life at as early an age as possible. The rising age level of graduates of colleges and universities had long been a problem for educators, and so eminent a leader as Charles W. Eliot of Harvard had regarded this trend, produced by the raising of college admission standards and the lengthening of professional courses, as one which was of serious concern to the country as well as to the universities.... Already the lengthening of the College's course from five to seven years had reduced the representation of its graduates in the professional schools of Columbia and other universities of the city.[33]

The original preparatory year of the Free Academy might have served as the seed from which a secondary education level could have developed in Old N.Y.C. As Kaestle observed

> As an institutional precedent, the Free Academy was important in the development of the city's schooling system, providing for the first time tax-supported, tuition-free schooling beyond the common school level.[34]

In fact the preparatory year never evolved beyond its initial function as a limited bridge from grammar to collegiate instruction.

For half a century it remained in its original form and did not grow into a separate and distinct entity. Nor did it serve as a spur to the founding of other secondary level public institutions.

We need to look at the nature of Old N.Y.C. and its specific educational history in order to better comprehend why it chose to retain its own unique educational model and lag nearly 20 years behind its neighbor across the river in providing free public high school education to its youth.

Public education took a delayed and different route in Old N.Y.C. Unlike other jurisdictions in the early 19th century in N.Y.S., Old N.Y.C. was exempted from providing common schooling to its children through a public board of education. In lieu of public auspices and control of primary education, a philanthropic institution, the Public School Society, offered free education to the children of the City.[35] Founded to provide basic literacy, numeracy and moral instruction to the children of indigent whites, it was stigmatized as a school system for paupers.[36] Those who could afford school fees sent their chidren to private schools, usually affiliated with churches or synagogues.[37]

Following a protracted "religious war" fought over apportionment of State education funds to the schools of various religious and non-denominational groups which offered free instruction to the City's children, the Board of Education of N.Y.C. was finally created in 1842.[38] Not until 1853, however, when the Board absorbed the schools of the Public School

Society, can we say that primary education was fully accepted as a public responsibility.

Providing basic primary instruction to all children proved to be an enormous task in Old N.Y.C. in light of the very rapid growth in the school-aged population and the large numbers of children of immigrants who entered the schools without a knowledge of English or of "American" culture. Universal primary attendance constantly eluded the Board and thus it is not surprising that it did not voluntarily increase the number of years of "mass" education. Popular and "reformist" pressures focused instead on provision of school places for all primary aged children, rather than upon the creation of high school opportunities.[39]

The City's Board, however, in one of its earliest actions (1847) founded the Free Academy. With one imaginative stroke it had created a new educational "model." Rather than adopting the tripartite system of schooling then emerging as the common pattern in the U.S. (primary- academy/high school-college), it created a two-tiered system: a primary school of 7 years for all chidren, a collegiate level of 4 years, and a highly selective sub-freshman preparatory year to effectively and efficiently bridge the two.

Although the admissions procedure at the Free Academy was highly selective, it was not perceived as undemocratic. Its founders and early supporters viewed it as the "Free Academy for the poor man's children."[40] The school's founding father, Townsend Harris (President of the City's Board of Education), wrote in 1847 that

> while it shall be in no way inferior to any of our Colleges in character, amount, or value of the information given to the pupils; the course of study to be pursued will have more special reference to the active duties of operative life, rather than those more particularly regarded as necessary for the pulpit, Bar, or the Medical profession. Another important feature in the proposed plan is that the laboring class of our fellow-citizens may have the opportunity of giving to their children an education that will more effectively fit them for the various departments of labor and toil, by which they will earn their bread. Such an institution, where Chemistry, Mechanics, Architecture, Agriculture, Navigation, physical as well as moral or mental science, etc., etc., are thoroughly and practically taught, would soon raise up a class of mechanics and artists, well skilled in their several pursuits, and eminently qualified to infuse into their fellow-workmen a spirit that would add dignity to labor....[41]

Although a great many of the graduates did enter the professions, and very few, if any, became "educated mechanics" in the sense that Townsend Harris had envisioned, who would enoble the humble ranks of the laboring classes, the Free Academy did recruit its students from across a broad spectrum of the City's population. "The available evidence tends to vindicate the faith of the electorate and the intentions of the Democrat-dominated Board of Education, at least in terms of the range of backgrounds of those admitted to the Academy," as Kaestle discovered. Except for the absence of students drawn from the bottom quarter of the work force, "the term, 'People's College,' was not inappropriate."[42]

Of equal importance, as Kaestle notes,

> Considering that the matriculates had to be well versed in [a wide range of academic subjects], [the] enumeration [of the occupational backgrounds of students' fathers] indicates that the public schools...had succeeded in producing a cream of the crop which included large numbers of working-class children....[43]

In the 1850s High schools were still fighting to become

accepted educational institutions in America. The quasi-public academy (which often functioned as a college preparatory school) held sway in most parts of the land.[44] The Free Academy, which offered a highly structured and rigorous five-year course of study that had a slight "practical" tilt, combined the features of academy and college. Open to all on the basis of academic merit and tuition-free, it might have become a model for post-primary education in America. It was efficient in terms of a student's time, requiring only five years beyond primary to prepare oneself for the higher trades and professions.

As we know, Old N.Y.C.'s two-tiered model fell by the wayside in the course of American educational history, an evolutionary dead end. But it persisted in Old N.Y.C. (and was replicated at the girls' college, The Normal College, in 1869-70) until the last year of the 19th century. By that time the four-year high school had become the national norm and had been accepted by the State of New York as the only acceptable model. And in 1898 Maxwell arrived, bringing with him a commitment to the high school, and a well-elaborated set of ideas regarding the purposes and practices of secondary education.

In Brooklyn, as we saw, a dfferent, more "American" system of education had evolved: an 8-year elementary course, a 4-year secondary and (for those proceeding further) a 4-year baccalaureate program, 16 years from start to finish. In theory, at least, one exited from this system at about the same point as from the 12 year N.Y.C. system, ready to enter high school teaching, the higher reaches of the commercial world or further graduate or

professional studies. The Brooklyn system, however, did provide other than academic preparation in its high schools, and provided the opportunity for high school entrance to all of its grammar school graduates.

The limited opportunity to obtain free public secondary education in Old New York did introduce a degree of class bias into post-elementary education. Academic studies were primarily intended to prepare students for the entry examination to prestigious eastern colleges. Since entry requirements and exams varied from institution to institution well into the 20th century, "prep" schools were often established by the colleges to prepare their own future students (as was true in the case of the Grammar School of Columbia College, and the Grammar School of the University of the City of New York, now known as New York University). In that sense, the Free Academy followed a precedent established by its private sector colleagues. But given the highly developed private preparatory school sector in N.Y.C., much of the popular political pressure which might have supported public high schools (conceived as college preparatory programs), was siphoned off. The established classes in Old N.Y.C. had traditionally sent their children to private schools. While a few better-off families started to send their children to the public schools in the 1850s, public education always had to fight the stigma of its pauper school origins. By the late 19th century, with the rapid influx of "new immigrants," the public schools once again were viewed as schools for "them," not for the children of "the best people."

Heightened class consciousness in the late 19th century, especially in the urban northeast, made private education particularly appealing and helped to reduce pressures for public secondary (college preparatory) schooling.[45] Private schools became a means of distancing oneself and ones children from the possible social contamination in public "common schools."

In Brooklyn, however, with a very different educational history, with its long experience with public common schools, and with a relatively underdeveloped private school sector, the demand for post-primary education on the part of middle and upper class citizens expressed itself in and through the City's Board of Education. As a result, at a relatively early period, high schools were established and provided without tuition to all children of the City who were academically qualified.

Even after public high schools were established in Old N.Y.C., private college preparatory education at the secondary level continued to thrive, and does so to this day. As a student of American education, writing early in this century,has noted,

> The community recognises its duty to provide public secondary schools for all, and many of such schools are free. As these public schools are available for all, they do not appeal to some. People of a certain class of society and wealth prefer the private secondary school. ... Some of the private schools...enjoy a high social status, and consequently appeal by that fact alone to certain parents.[46]

While private preparatory schools may not have been much affected by the establishment of public high schools in N.Y.C., private post-primary vocational schools certainly were. Training programs to prepare for various occupations or trades flourished in the 19th and early 20th century in N.Y.C. Private proprietary

schools which functioned at the post-primary level largely succumbed to the competition of free public high schools which offered equivalent courses in the trades and in commercial skills. Some of these private schools, however, were reconstituted as post-secondary institutes and still flourish. But the vocational/trade schools founded and run by various philanthropic agencies generally chose not to compete with the public schools and passed out of existence. In many instances, however, they first transfered their assets (and at times their staff) to the Board of Education.

By the mid 1890s enrollment in Old N.Y.C.'s primary schools was approaching 200,000 but only a few hundred could continue their studies at C.C.N.Y. or the Normal College. The Board of Education was forced by circumstances to reconsider its design for education in the City, including the creation of an entirely new level of education. N.Y.C.'s growth into the preeminent mercantile center of the nation required a vast pool of educated workers, and primary schooling, in and of itself, was inadequate to the staff needs of banks, merchant houses, insurance companies, department stores and newly emerging "high tech" industries such as electricity and telephones. And as the City continued to receive a steady and massive influx of immigrants, most non-English speaking and from technologically and educationally backward areas, employers could not rely upon potential workers to finance their own occupational education, certainly not to the levels of language and technical competence desired.

New York City remained socially a two-caste society, with a relatively small number of financially established "Americans" who were segregated geographically, socially and educationally from the lower social orders, who were great in number and overwhelmingly immigrant. With changes in the workplace, however, it now became in the interest of both the "high born" and the humble to provide more education to all (although not necessarily all in the same schools).

In addition to the need for a better trained workforce, Old N.Y.C. also confronted the "immigration question" in its most extreme form. (Brooklyn was to confront the issue as well, but a decade or so later). Established New Yorkers were confused and overwhelmed by the massive alien community in its midst. This central fact of N.Y.C.'s existence at the turn of the century also had a lasting impact upon the City's schools. At the most basic level of social cohesion, more and more New Yorkers turned to the schools to solve the crisis. Schools were believed to be the one instutition of society which could educate and assimilate the immigrant masses (directly or indirectly through their children).[47] But if the public schools were to have any hope of transforming the children of immigrants, they had to be assured that all children would come under their tutelage, and for a sufficient number of years. Compulsory attendance laws and child labor laws, an extension in the age of compulsory schooling, an increase in the number of school days per year, strengthened enforcement of the laws on the books, and expansion of the school into afterschool hours and summer vacation activities,

meant that the public schools had more and more children for longer periods of their lives, especially children from immigrant homes.[48] By the outbreak of the Great War, approximately 70% of the nearly 800,000 students in the City's schools were of immigrant stock. The very press of numbers coupled with the desire to retain children in school until adulthood, especially immigrant children, encourged the growth of post-primary education.

The first principal of Boys' High School (De Witt Clinton) clearly understood the acculturative role the schools of N.Y.C. were asked to play.

> Unless an intelligent effort is made for the protection of our national ideals, the United States will be in a fair way to become un-Americanized; and sooner or later the question will become not how we may assimilate the foreign element, but how we may discern traces of our original government and institutional spirit.

Buchanan argued that "Education will solve every problem of our national life, even that of assimilating our foreign element." In order to dispell the ignorance in which he believed anarchy and poverty thrived, he believed that "the nation has a right to demand intelligence and virtue of every citizen, and to obtain these by force if necessary. Compulsory education we must have as a safeguard for our institutions." Through education the immigrant will learn English, the nature of our government, "and last but not least, it will make him feel that he is the peer of all if he conducts himself as a true American citizen.[49]

In 1896 the N.Y.S. legislalture passed a law granting the City the explicit authority to create high schools. Ostensibly this led to the founding of three high schools in 1897. In fact,

the Board could have petitioned much earlier for this authority, and it is not even certain that special legislation was required as it did not seem to have been necessary elsewhere in the State, Brooklyn being a prime example. It is more likely that the Board was moved to change its policies in response to the pressures of modern business and industry for trained workers, of citizens who wanted the schools to resolve the "alien threat," of the need to prepare teachers for its own schools who could meet State certification requirments, and especially of the pent-up demand for post-primary education on the part of the rapidly growing numbers of primary school graduates.

The Board's decision to create three high schools was also a decision to create a third level of education. Secondary education now joined primary and collegiate as Board of Education responsibilities.[50] In September of 1897, in temporary, inadequate quarters, Boys', Girls' and Mixed High Schools opened their doors to students.[51] In January of 1898 the merged City of Greater New York came into being, and in March, William Maxwell became its first City Superintendent of Schools. He arrived at a time when Old N.Y.C.'s high schools were in an immature stage, without local precedent to guide them, and without a clearly charted future. It was an auspicious moment for the former Brooklyn Superintendent to have arrived on the scene.

IV. High School Development in the City of Greater New York

The initial charter of the City of Greater New York left responsibility and control of education in a confused state. The boroughs had been merged and placed under a single mayor, who had considerable powers. Education was left divided, with powerful borough boards who could exercise independence for a weak central Board of Education. In 1901 the City's charter was revised, leading to the creation of a strong central Board of Education (appointed 1902) and considerable strengthening of the office of City Superintendent of Schools. Superintendent Maxwell, with greater leverage to shape the City's school system, was aided by a Board of Supervisors (composed of the Deputy and Associate School Superintendents). In addition to its daily supervisory responsibilities, this "professional educators board" was charged with initiating educational policies for presentation to the lay Board of Education.[52]

Administratively, one of Maxwell's first and most long-lasting actions was to create a High School Division, headed by a Deputy Superintendent. High schools were now bureaucratically enshrined in the City of New York.

Among the first actions of the newly empowered Board of Education was to approve a common course of study for all City high schools (excluding Manual training and the commercial high schools).[53] As described by Maxwell,

> This course...is a judicious compromise between the old "ironclad" course for all students and the system of free election of studies which is gradually filtering down

> from the college to the high school. Each student is required to study the prescribed course in English, one foreign language, mathematics, science, drawing, singing, and physical culture, and then may elect certain other studies which he desires to pursue.[54]

This course of study looked remarkably like those approved for the Brooklyn high schools in the 1890s and, not suprisingly, reflected the recommendations of the N.E.A. Committee of Ten.

The high schools were growing at a dizzying rate, nearly tripling in enrollments between 1898 and the fall of 1903 when they had grown to nearly 18,900. As Maxwell pridefully wrote,

> The rapid growth of the high schools is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the school system. It shows better than any amount of argument or eloquence that these schools are meeting the wants of the people and that the people want the schools.[55]

More than the growth of mere numbers, the first few years of Maxwell's superintendency served to clearly establish the third level of education in the educational system of N.Y.C. Never again could New York turn back to a two-tiered model (primary-collegiate). The secondary level, as a separate and distinct entity, now officially intruded itself between elementary school and college. The high school wedged itself for four years between primary and tertiary levels, erasing and surplanting the previous single year bridge.

Furthermore, admission to secondary school was to follow the open "democratic" Brooklyn plan, not the selective "aristocratic" Old New York approach. But was there all gain and no loss, was one policy clearly more democratic than the other?

Old New york had addressed itself to post-primary education

but came forward with a different set of responses and different priorities. For those who were academically gifted, a direct link to college was provided and college "prep" and college education was provided gratis. As we saw, it took only 12 years to complete all studies and enter upon ones life course. It did not prolong formal studies beyond the teen years and acknowledged the need for most young men to enter their chosen work (or young women graduating from the Normal College to enter teaching) prior to their twenties. This was especially true for children of working class and small business class parents. The new educational order however - primary/secondary/college - required 16 years to complete, delaying entry into work by four years, a prohibitive "opportunity cost" for many low and moderate income families. At least for the scholastically talented, the old system may have been more responsive to their needs and conditions.

The Old City of new York had also accepted limited responsibility for the education of the mass of its citizens who did not progress beyond primary school. Commencing in 1888 and expanding exponentially in the 1890s, The Board established the Adult Free Lectures to provide a means of moral and intellectual instruction for the working men and women of the City. By 1899 well over one-half million New Yorkers, mainly drawn from the working classes, attend lectures on such varied topics as "The Times of the Roman Emperors," "Practical Electricity," (there was a complete 19 courses lecture series on electricity as well), "Money and How to Make it," and "Indians as Folks," all profusely illustrated by stereopticon slides or scientific

experiments. In 1903 lectures were first offered in Yiddish and Italian to reach these large immigrant populations. In 1914-15, its peak year, attendance approached 1.3 million.[56]

The Adult Free Lectures, known as the "People's University" and the "Open University," were a form of post-elementary education. Although they could not grant "credentials," they were a successful means of popular education in the American tradition of the lyceum and atheneum. They provided "wholesome" entertainment and a means of self-improvement (culturally and occupationally). The Adult Free Lectures may represent another evolutionary dead-end pursued by the N.Y.C. Board of Education, but the contemporary multitude of non-degree bearing continuing and adult education programs can be considered the Program's intellectual descendents.

One thing that public high schools could provide that Free Lectures and limited entrance to a sub-freshman year could not, was "open enrollment" in a diploma granting institution and unlimited opportunity for all children of the City to extend their educational horizons. A three-tiered system required more years to complete(if you were committed to pursue it to its logical end), but the first two levels were readily accessible to all who were diligent academically and who were not constrained by extremes of poverty or parental opposition to schooling.

High schools also offered a diploma in recognition of completion (and also as a reward). The diploma, in turn, could be traded in for a better livelihood (or so it was believed) or entry into college. The memoir literature of immigrant authors

and the anecdotal reports of students and teachers of the period, suggest that high school was perceived as available, and accessible by children from low income and immigrant families, and that many actually availed themselves of the opportunity.[58]

Whether it was fair to say that Old N.Y.C.'s educational policies were aristocratic, as Maxwell contended, or that the City had defined democratic education in a radically different way, is hard to say. However, we do know which "model" won. N.Y.C., with Maxwell's encouragement and guidance, adopted the "American plan" and provided open access high school education to all its students who qualified and requested admission.

The City of Greater New York adopted the Brooklyn model not only in terms of unrestricted open access to qualified elementary graduates, but also with regard to specialized high schools. Commercial, Manual and Girls' Technical (Washington Irving) High Schools were among the earliest schools organized in Manhattan following the 1902 Board of Education reorganization.

Maxwell's contention that the same education was appropriate for "entry upon life" and for entry into college was also embraced by the Board. In later years (bolstered by the N.E.A. Committee Report on the high school curriculum, "The Cardinal Principles") classical academic studies did battle with "life adjustment education." Maxwell, however, had bequeathed to his intellectual successors a system of high school education based on traditional disciplinary lines. The "classical curriculum" was the local N.Y.C. "tradition," which helped those educators fighting against a narrow definition of education "for

entry upon life."

Maxwell, along with the gifted architect, C.B.J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings, developed exemplary architectural models for urban high schools. They were responsible for such impressive and revolutionary structures as Morris and De Witt Clinton High Schools, the High School of Commerce, Manual Training High School and the lavishly praised Washington Irving High School. Of the latter, John Quincy Adams, Secretary of the Muncipal Art Commission, claimed that "in this structure the city speaks. Its message is symmetry,order and unostentatious richness. It is simple, it is dignified, it is an inspring work of art."[59]

V. Conclusion

In the few years between 1897 and 1914, the high school had conquered Old New York City. Through the rapid increase in the number of high schools, their well ordered curricula, and especially their magnificent buildings, the City did speak. But the message was not just aesthetic, as Adams implied. As the inheritor of a great American family tradition, he should have appreciated the political message broadcast by the high schools. These great schools proclaimed that educational opportunity was to be democratized. Every child could aspire to 12 years of education and could hope to prepare him or herself for commercial, technical, trade or academic pursuits. For young women who chose not to prepare themselves for the work place, "domestic science" could be studied in the new modern high schools along with the "four lines of academic

work."

The high school served to extend the possibility of mass education well beyond the elementary years and right to the doors of the colleges. By vastly expanding opportunity to enter high school to native-born and immigrant, conditions were created whereby motivated individuals could realistically hope to use schooling as a vehicle of upward mobility. It guaranteed that achievement at one level would insure the right of access to the next successive level. Whether or not Maxwell and his colleagues realized it, vastly expanded numbers of high school graduates inevitably led to increased pressure at the collegiate level. Certainly there were to be many unanticipated consequences of a policy of "open enrollment" high schools.[60]

The great success achieved by the public high schools early in this century had important long-term consequences for education citywide in both the public and private sectors. The public high school came close to creating a public monopoly in the field of secondary education. They effectively eliminated private secondary-level vocational and commercial schools, many of whose students were now legally compelled to attend "regular" school. Other potential students could receive equivalent traing at no cost in public vocational, trade, manual or commerical schools.

By virtue of their commanding presence, public high schools came to set the educational "standard for secondary education in N.Y.C. (including the "four-year" course). This was especially true for the emerging Catholic and later Jewish parochial school systems.

Making high school graduation a requirement for college entrance forced the city colleges to shift upward, at least in terms of the age of students served if not in the level of academic instruction. It also forced an increase in the required number of years to complete "the system," from 12 to 16, with mixed consequences, as we observed above. Finally, the existence of high schools, available to all who graduated from elementary school, was believed to have had a positive influence on primary education in the City, motivating schools and students to improve retention and promomtion rates, and enhancing academic standards.[61] On the other hand, freely available high school education debased the value of an elementary school graduation certificate.

Would Old N.Y.C. have developed a high school system had it not been joined to educationally progressive Brooklyn and had not Maxwell been appointed City Superintendent? Undoubtedly yes, since New York had become increasingly out of step with emerging "American" educational norms. But the fact that Old New York entered the age of the high school at the very time when it was joined to Brooklyn, and that the former Brooklyn School superintendent, a man with clear and strongly held positions regarding secondary schooling, was appointed the City's first "City Superintendent of Schools," insured that Brooklyn's high school legacy would be passed on directly to the new City of Greater New York. Born in Brooklyn and reared in Greater New York, the intial "Brooklyn" imprint on the City's high schools clearly persists down to our own day.

Footnotes

1. Calculated from data in the Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New york (hereafter referred to as Journal), 1898, table following page 406, and Journal, 1914, monthly report of statistics, September 1914. The September 1914 figure includes 1,945 students in teacher training schools.

2. Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac, 1901, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1901), p. 582.

3. Journal, 1898, table following p. 406.

4. Forty-first Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Brooklyn, for the year ending December 31st, 1895 (hereafter referred to as Brooklyn Superintendent's Report), (Brooklyn: Board of Education, n.d.), p. 17.

5. For general background on turn of the century Brooklyn, see Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac, 1901; Margaret Latimer, Two Cities: New York and Brooklyn the Year the Great Bridge Opened (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance, 1983). I am indebted to my daugher, Rachel H. Brumberg, for providing me with information on life in late 19th century Brooklyn, presented in her "1883, A Step Toward Modern New York City," (N.Y., 1985), typescript.

6. Calculated from data presented in Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1985.

7. Ibid., pp. 56-75.

8. Bessie Louise Pierce, Public Opinion in the Teaching of History (N.Y.: Knopf, 1926), p. 13. See also Edward Krug, The Shaping of the American High School 1880-1920 (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

9. Journal, 1897, p. 589.

10. See, for example, the position set forth by William J.S. Bryan at a speech he presented at the opening of the New York State Education Building in 1912. "The decision of the Supreme Court of Michigan in the Kalamazoo High School case, which was handed down in 1872, settled affirmatively the question of the authority of local boards to establish high schools in the absence of special statutory provision for them...." "The Evolution of the Public High School," Proceedings of the Dedication of the New York State Education Building, Albany (Albany, N.Y.: N.Y.S. Education Department, Nineth Annual Report - Supplemental Volume, 1913), p. 81.

11. Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1897, pp. 40-44.

12. Since new entrants to high school could have been graduates of prior years or from private schools or schools in other towns, we cannot say what proportion of the 1894-95 grammar graduates entered high school in 1895. The proportion was calculated from data in the Forty-first Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the City of Brooklyn for the period ending December 31, 1895 (Brooklyn: Department of Public Instruction, n.d.), pp. 35, 39; Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1897, pp. 26,32.

13. For an innovative approach to the study of social class vs. academic achievement as determinants of high school attendance, see Joel Perlmann, "Who Stayed in School? Social Structure and Academic Achievement in the Determination of Enrollment Patterns, Providence, Rhode Island, 1880-1925," Journal of American History Vol. 72, No. 3 (Dec. 1985): 588-614. The Providence case suggests the importance of school achievement as an important independent determinant of high school entry and graduation, and is an important explanatory variable independent of social background characteristics, including father's occupation and income.

14. Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1895, pp. 52-53.

15. Ibid., p. 53.

16. Ibid., p. 54.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Manual training, as it was then defined, is analogous to our term technological education, and was meant to lead to post-secondary studies at polytechnical, engineering and scientific schools, as well as to industry. Technical training, as the term was then used, referred to training for productive work roles, as in printing, building trades, needle trades, etc. It comes closest to our present term, vocational education. Trade school, as it was then constituted, generally was a post-elementary short-term training program directed at entry level skills at the semi-skilled level. Such courses could last from a semester up to two years. It was clearly distinguished from "secondary education" by the absence of the "four main lines of high school work," although some practical arithmetic, English and often civics formed part of instruction. Trade schools were terminal educational institutions, and were often considered as alternatives to the last two years of elementary school for those not intending to enter high school. Commercial courses, on the other hand, ranged from 2 years of lower level preparation to full four-year courses which led to middle-level jobs in commerce, to advanced commerical and to accounting studies in post-secondary institutions.

20. Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1895, p. 55.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. New York (City), Department of Education, Courses of Study, 1886-1912 [37 items] [A scrapbook of printed, manuscript and typescript syllabi for N.Y.C. high schools. Gift of Girls' High School, Brooklyn N.Y., to the Brooklyn College Library]; Brooklyn Superintendent's Report, 1896, pp. 54-60.

24. Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools, 1903 (N.Y.: Board of Education, n.d.), p. 55 (hereafter referred to as N.Y.C. Superintendent's Annual Report).

25. National Education Association of the U.S. Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, Report in T.R. Sizer, Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century (1964).

26. Journal, 1898, table following p. 406. Enrollments represent average registers for the school year 1897-98, at all levels of schooling.

27. Journal, 1895, pp. 508-510.

28. Examples are the "industrial schools" located in tenement neighborhoods, the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, and the Hebrew Technical Institute. Commerical schools, of which there were a number, are listed in such directories as The Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac.

29. Regents credits were accepted as far afield as the University of Missouri at Columbia. See Marcus E. Ravage, An American in the Making: The Life Story of an Immigrant (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1917).

30. For the history of C.C.N.Y., see R.H. Eckelberry, The History of the Municipal University in the United States, U.S. Office of Education Bulletin 1932, no. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, 1932); S.Willis Rudy, The College of the City of New York: A History 1847-1947 (N.Y.: The City College Press, 1949).

31. The school took the name of the founder of City College (originally named the Free Academy), who was President of the N.Y.C. Board of Education in 1846-47. After City College moved to its present site in 1907, Townsend Harris Hall was provided with its own building on the new campus. See Eckelberry, p. 54.

32. Eckelberry, p. 54.

33. Rudy, p. 311.

34. Carl F. Kaestle, The Evolution of an Urban School System, New York City, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), p. 109.

35. Ibid., chapt. 3; William O. Bourne, History of the Public School Society of the City of New York (N.Y.: Wm. Wood & Co., 1870); Archie Emerson Palmer, The New York Public School; being a history of free education in the city of New York (N.Y.: the Macmillan Co., 1905); Diana Ravitch, The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805-1973 (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1974), chapts. 1-10.

36. Black chidren were provided with separate education. See Charles C. Andrews, The History of the New York African Free-Schools [originally pub. 1830 by Mahlon Day, N.Y.C.] (N.Y.: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

37. For the interesting case of the education of Jewish children in antebellum N.Y.C., see Hyman B. Grinstein, The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860 (Phil.: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945).

38. Ravitch, Great School Wars, chapt. 7.

39. See, for example, the publications of the municipal reform club, Good Government Club "E" : "Public School Buildings," (Sept. 10, 1895) pamphlet; "Report of School Census, 1895," (Sept. 10, 1895) pamphlet.

40. Rudy, p. 21.

41. Quoted in Eckelberry, pp. 40-41.

42. Kaestle, pp. 106, 107.

43. Ibid., p. 106.

44. Krug, Shaping of the American High School.

45. See Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1966).

46. E.E. Hughes, The Making of Citizens: A Study in Comparative Education (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 270.

47. Stephan F. Brumberg, Going to America, Going to School: The Jewish Immigrant Public School Encounter in Turn-of-the-Century New York City (N.Y.: Praeger, 1986), chapts. 4, 5.

48. See Moses Stambler, "The Effect of Compulsory Education and Child Labor laws on High School Attendance in New York City, 1898-1917," History of Education Quarterly (Summer 1968): 189-213.

49. John T. Buchanan, "How to Assimilate the Foreign Element in Our Population," Forum 32 (1902), pp. 686, 691, 693.

50. The Free Academy was under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of Education from its founding until 1866. Subsequently members of the N.Y.C. Board of Education served as ex officio members of C.C.N.Y.'s Board of Trustees. A similar ex officio relationship existed between the Board and the Board of Trustees of the Normal College.

51. For a full discussion of the founding and early years of Morris High School, see Gary Hermalyn, "The Creation of Morris High School: 1896-1904. The First Public High School in the Bronx," Ed.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1985.

52. See David C. Hammack, Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century (N.Y.: Russell Sage Foundation, 1982); Herbert Shapiro, "Reorganization of the New York City Public School System, 1890-1910," Ph. D. Dissertation, Yeshiva University, June 1967.

53. Department of Education, The City of New York, "Course of Study for the High Schools (Except Manual Training and Commercial High Schools)," 1903. Handwritten notes on the document's cover suggests it was implemented in the fall of 1902.

54. N.Y.C. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1903, p. 55.

55. Ibid., p. 54.

56. Brumberg, Going to America, Going to School, chapt. 7.

57. A study is clearly in order along the lines suggested by Perlmann, "Who Stayed in School?...", which explores the socio-economic and academic achievement correlates of high school entrance and graduation in early 20th century N.Y.C.

58. Brumberg, Going to America, Going to School, chapt. 6.

59. "Report of the Superintendent of School Buildings for the Calendar Year Ending Dec. 31, 1913," (N.Y.: Board of Education, n.d.), p.99.

60. See Appendix, "East European Jewish Students and the Unintended Consequences of Expanded High School Opportunities in early 20th century N.Y.C."

61. See, for example, N.Y.C. Superintendent's Annual Report,1899, pp. 87-88, 96-97; N.Y.C. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1901, p. 97.

APPENDIX

"East European Jewish Students and the Unintended Consequences of Expanded High School Opportunities in Early 20th Century N.Y.C."

An examination of the single largest immigrant group in New York City's school system, East European Jews, suggests how extensive were the unanticipated consequences of rapidly expanded high school opportunities early in this century.

Ambition and motivation, coupled with adequate family support, allowed ever increasing numbers of East European Jewish students to seize avaiable secondary school opportunities. Many sought to use high schools as a route to college and through college into positions of higher economic and social status. Education was viewed instrumentally as an effective means to overcome barriers of caste and class.

Educational leaders, Jewish and Gentile, generally did not view public schools as engines of upward social and economic mobility, at least not for substantial numbers of immigrant students. Rather, they felt school should prepare students to better discharge their adult roles as workers and citizens and as members of the socio-economic class into which they had been born.[1]

But the students had learned the practical lesson of New York's public school system: education should be democratic and opportunity for entry at each successive level should be provided to all those whose prior achievement qualified them. Thus educators tended to by unsuccessful in limiting the very educational ambition they had encouraged throughout the 12 years of a child's public school career. Many Jewish students entered and graduated from high school and sought entry into college.

Although these candidates were academically qualified, many institutions feared that admitting too many Jewish students would lead to tipping and to being "overrun" by them.[2] In 1916-17, for example, Jews represented nearly three-fourths of enrollments at C.C.N.Y., 44% at Hunter, and 20% at both Fordham University and N.Y.U.[3]

A greatly enlarged pool of academically qualified Jewish students had been created, in a very short period of time, when "democratic" high schools were created in N.Y.C., the very center of Jewish settlement in America. This large number of Jewish applicants forced many colleges, who wished to limit Jewish entry, to redesign admission procedures and institute the practice which came to be known as "quotas."[4]

If there had not been a policy of open high school enrollment in N.Y.C., it would have taken far longer for the children of Jewish immigrants, in significant numbers, to qualify for college entry. Were quotas a response to the sudden onrush of academically qualified Jewish applicants, or would they still have been erected if the number of Jewish applicants had grown gradually? Without knowing it, the realization of City Superintendent of Schools William Maxwell's design for democratic high schools had forced the issue.

Footnotes to Appendix

1. Stephan F. Brumberg, Going to America, Going to School (N.Y.: Praeger, 1986), chapt. 8.

2. "Yale's Limit on Jewish Enrollment Lasted Until Early 1960's, Book Says," N.Y. Times, March 4, 1986, p. B1.

3. Menorah Journal (October 1917), pp. 252-53.

4. Harold S. Wechsler, "The Rationale for Restriction: Ethnicity and College Admission in America, 1910 - 1980," American Quarterly Vol. 36, no.5 (Winter 1984): 643-667.